

the standard of living, but for the worker who has to change careers, it can be a painful experience. We have a responsibility to help workers. When a job goes overseas, somebody—some family hurts in America, and I understand that. And we can help, and that's why I believe in trade adjustment assistance. I think it's in the Nation's interest that we help somebody gain the skills to be able to work on an existing job if they happen to lose a job because of trade. I'm going to work with the Congress to reauthorize and improve this important program. I want the program to focus on workers who have lost jobs as a result of trade.

I also will continue to work to improve Federal job training programs. I'm a big believer in community colleges. Community colleges are market-driven, economic opportunities. Community colleges enable a local community to design a curriculum to meet the needs of local businesses. And I know that when somebody gets additional education, their productivity goes up. When their productivity goes up, it means they're more likely to be able to find a good job at higher pay.

Some in our country are fearful about our capacities to compete in the global economy. I'm not. I believe that so long as the playing field is level, we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere. But we need to do a better job of educating our people about the benefits of free and fair trade, and your companies and associations can lead the way. For example, at General Electric, employees and plant managers receive information packets explaining how pending trade deals with other countries will expand business and job opportunities here at home. Efforts like this program help build support for free trade policies that help us remain prosperous and competitive. And I strongly urge you to take up the cause of free trade with your employees.

I also ask you to take on another important assignment: Help educate the Members of the United States Congress. Help them understand that free trade is a vital national interest. Help them make the right decisions when these votes come up.

Thanks for letting me come by to say hello and to share with you some thoughts about free trade. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Import Safety Working Group *November 6, 2007*

Good afternoon. I just had an important briefing from Secretary Leavitt and other members of the Interagency Working Group on Import Safety. The United States is one of the most open markets in the world, and our consumers are better off because they have a wide variety of products from across the world to choose from. And while we have strong food and product safety standards, we need to do more to ensure that American families have confidence in what they find on our store shelves. They have the right to expect the food they eat or the medicines they take or the toys they buy for their children to be safe.

Last year, the United States imported nearly \$2 trillion of goods through more than 825,000 importers, and the vast majority of these imports are safe. Unfortunately, in recent months, Americans have seen imports from toys to toothpaste to pet food recalled because of safety concerns. My administration takes this problem seriously. So in July, I issued an Executive order establishing the Interagency Working Group on Import Safety. I asked this group to review the problem and to make recommendations for actions that we can take to address it.

In September, this working group issued a report recommending that we change our strategy to ensure the safety of our imports. For many years, we have relied on a strategy based on identifying unsafe products at the border. The problem is that the growing volume of products coming into our country makes this approach increasingly unreliable. The working group recommended that we adopt a smarter and more effective approach that focuses on prevention, building safety into products from the very beginning of the supply chain. Under this approach, we will

focus on stopping dangerous products from reaching our border in the first place—for example, by ensuring that food and consumer products meet our standards for safety before they leave their home countries.

Today the working group presented me with 14 recommendations for areas where we can begin implementing such an approach. And I appreciate your hard work. For example, we will establish new incentives for importers that follow strong safety practices and demonstrate a good track record. We will increase our training of inspectors in foreign countries, so they can stop dangerous goods at their borders instead of ours. We will work for higher and more uniform standards for high-risk foods and consumer goods. And we will work to increase penalties for those who violate U.S. import laws and regulations. Secretary Leavitt will provide you with a more detailed briefing on these recommendations in a few moments.

In conjunction with these import safety measures, the Food and Drug Administration is today unveiling a Food Protection Plan. This plan addresses both imported and domestically produced food and will strengthen the FDA's ability to coordinate with other Federal Agencies to protect our food supply. By identifying risks all along the food supply chain, this plan will help prevent the problems from arising, respond effectively if they do, and improve communication with industry and our public.

A key feature of both our Import Safety Plan and our Food Protection Plan is a recommendation that the FDA be granted new authority to recall the unsafe food products. Specifically, the FDA would be empowered to order a recall when a company refuses to recall their product voluntarily or moves too slowly in removing the unsafe product from the market. With this authority, the FDA will be in a better position to act quickly if any problem occurs.

The steps I have announced today will require wide-ranging cooperation between Federal Agencies, foreign governments, the private sector, and consumer safety organizations. Some steps can be implemented by the executive branch, and we will move forward with these measures. Others will require legislation, and we will work with Congress to

enact the appropriate laws. And all these steps will require a commitment by all involved to make the safety of our children and our families the highest priority.

I thank the members of the working group for their continued efforts on this important issue. The American people expect our system of import safety to be strong and effective, and we will continue to work to make sure it is.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Executive Order 13439.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting Budget Amendments for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice

November 6, 2007

Dear Madam Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed amendments to my FY 2008 requests for the Departments of Homeland Security and Justice. These amendments, when combined with funding enacted earlier this year for the FBI (Public Law 110–28), would provide \$436 million to take important steps to enhance ongoing efforts for protecting the homeland. The amendments will enhance the security of the Government's civilian cyber networks and will further address emerging threats.

Overall, the discretionary budget authority proposed in my FY 2008 Budget would not be increased. The details of these amendments proposal are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Nicolas Sarkozy of France

November 6, 2007

Mr. President, distinguished guests: Laura and I offer you a warm welcome to the White